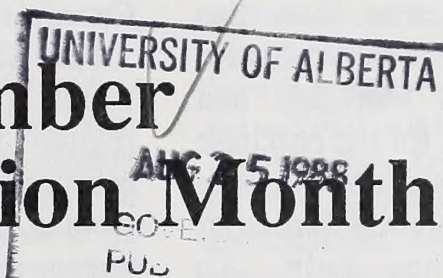


FOCUS FAMILY PREVENTION

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Minister Declares November Family Violence Prevention Month



Social Services Minister Connie Osterman has designated November as Family Violence Prevention Month in Alberta. Letters have been sent to all the mayors, reeves, Indian Band chiefs, and Metis community leaders in the province challenging them to participate during the month. The enthusiastic response to the Minister's challenge last year was an important factor in deciding to focus attention again on this difficult problem.

This enthusiasm is evidence of the increasing interest and concern shown by many agencies and community groups. The number of agencies and groups devoting time and resources to this issue has increased dramatically in recent years. A directory of family violence services and other initiatives, published by the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence in 1986, listed 145 community agencies involved in some kind of activity related to family violence. The revised 1988 directory lists 178. The largest increases are in the number of community coordinating groups, crisis lines and women's resource, information and support centres. There are now several new women's support centres designed especially for immigrant women.

One of the first community coordinating groups, the Hinton Society for the Prevention of Family Violence, pioneered a Family

Violence Prevention Month in November, 1986. Members of the society organized numerous activities aimed at raising awareness of the incidence, dynamics and seriousness of family violence. Out of this experience, they compiled a manual of activities and suggestions.

Encouraged by the success of the Hinton campaign, Mrs. Osterman declared November 1987 the first Family Violence Prevention Month in Alberta and provided community leaders with copies of the Hinton manual. More than 50 communities took up the Minister's challenge last November. Another five had planned awareness campaigns for other times. Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) programs organized local activities, as did crisis associations, family violence prevention committees and agencies. Ideas from the Hinton manual were used by many communities. Local libraries, newspapers, radio and television stations assisted. Women's shelter staff and volunteers across the province contributed their expertise. Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachments, schools, churches, service clubs, and staff members from the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission and Alberta Social Services were also involved.

Proclamations were publicized in local newspapers and on posters.

Information about family violence was distributed in shopping malls, libraries, schools, and at film showings, forums, workshops, and panel discussions. Local media contributed by publishing and broadcasting information. Many communities developed and/or purchased material for continuing use.

Several communities have reported a noticeable increase in awareness and discussion about this issue. Some concrete results noted were: an increase in calls for assistance, the establishment of support groups for abused women, new board members for an already established committee, and a new family violence prevention group.

The idea of declaring November Family Violence Prevention Month is widely supported across the province and the Minister is again urging communities to plan activities which will increase the level of awareness and ultimately help reduce the suffering caused by violence in families.

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Federal Money for Family Violence Prevention

On June 7, 1988 the federal government announced that six federal departments will spend a total of \$40 million in additional funds over the next four years to help address the problem of family violence. More than half of the money, \$22.2 million, is for use by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, for the purchase and construction of facilities to house abused women and children in need of short-term emergency help. An additional \$1.8 million for Health and Welfare Canada will go to their Social Services Program Branch and \$800,000 will go to the National Health Research and Development Program. These funds will be used for research, development and evaluation of social services and health approaches for dealing with family violence. Social Services Program Branch will receive additional money to study the effects of neglect on the health of the elderly, and to expand the resource collection of the National

Clearinghouse on Family Violence.

Four million dollars will be devoted to community-based programs and other initiatives which address the problem of family violence among Canada's Aboriginal people.

The Secretary of State programs, which fund community initiatives related to the needs of women, multicultural groups, Aboriginal women and disabled persons, will receive an additional \$3.2 million over the next four years for activities related to family violence.

The Department of Justice will have \$3 million to support research, development of public legal information material, and demonstration projects related to the legal approach to family violence. Two suggested research topics are the nature and incidence of elder abuse, and the effectiveness of treatment groups for abusive men. Also of interest are charging and prosecution policies across the country. The Solicitor

General will receive an additional \$2.8 million to expand existing programs.

The remainder of the money will be used to support a series of consultations with provincial and territorial government officials "to develop a coherent national strategy for action" and to organize a national conference on family violence in Ottawa in June, 1989.

Health and Welfare Canada is the leading department for all federal initiatives. If you have an idea for a project, send a short description of the project to: Ms. Elaine Scott, Director, Family Violence Prevention Program, Health & Welfare Canada, Brooke Claxton Building, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, K1A 1B5. Phone: (613) 957-0622. If your idea fits the guidelines, they will ensure that you will be directed to the appropriate department for funding. They will also advise you of the information that will be required for the final proposal.

Did You Know?

- The former Ontario Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse has severed its direct connection with the Government of Ontario and has changed its name. It is now called The Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse. Dr. David Wolfe has been named Director of the newly-created Research Department, and has already identified several priority areas that need to be researched.

- The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters hosted a one-day seminar for its members and other invited guests, June 17 in Edmonton, in conjunction with its Annual General Meeting the following day. Featured speaker at the seminar was Linda McLeod, author of *Battered But Not Beaten: Preventing*

Wife Battering in Canada (1987). Ms. MacLeod shared her observations on the history and present status of shelters for battered women across Canada. She also spoke about family violence in rural communities. For more information about seminar presentations check the next edition of the A.C.W.S. newsletter, or contact Ann Tweddle at 488-2470.

- Two recent national conferences addressed the issue of family violence. Three papers were presented on wife abuse and one on elder abuse at the International Family Nursing Conference in Calgary, May 24-27. At the Exchange '88 conference in Winnipeg June 5-8, child abuse was on the agenda as part of a national

exchange on health and social issues in education.

- The Camrose Elder Abuse Committee is planning a study of elder abuse in the Camrose area. The study, planned for the fall, will attempt to determine the prevalence of the problem and the need for services.

- The Institute for the Prevention of Family Violence Conference on Family Violence Prevention planned for November in Edmonton will not take place as planned.

- The Women's Inter-Church Committee has prepared an education kit: "Hands to End Violence Against Women." Copies are available for \$15 from the Committee at 77 Charles St. W. Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1K5.

Community News

Central

A booklet designed to inform teenagers about dating violence and wife abuse has been developed by HELP for Victims of Family Violence in Sundre. The booklet is divided into two parts. The first part addresses dating violence in the context of unhealthy relationships, defines abuse, presents different scenarios of dating violence and offers suggestions as to where to go for help. It also contains information about healthy dating relationships. The second part describes the impact on teens of witnessing wife abuse in their homes and offers advice on what teens can do for themselves to deal with their thoughts and feelings. Information for this booklet was gathered from students in the County of Mountainview. Funding for the project was provided by Secretary of State.

Copies may be obtained for \$5 from HELP for Victims of Family Violence, Box 705, Sundre, Alberta, T0M 1X0. Phone (403) 638-3220.

South

Harbour House, the women's shelter in Lethbridge operated two group programs this past spring for children who had been in the shelter with their mothers. Donna Cruikshank, a shelter child care worker, conducted sessions with one group of five and six-year-old children and another with seven- and eight-year-olds. More group sessions will be available in the fall. Donna also works with the Lethbridge Family Service Association in offering group programs for children from troubled families. Child care and crisis workers exchange visits with their counterparts at the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter. "The visits provide support and opportunities for sharing ideas and resources," says Harbour House Director, Brenda Hill.

* * *

Parents' Place, a resource centre for parents, has been offering parenting education, support and information to families in Lethbridge for seven years. The centre, housed in the city's old court house, has a resource centre and lending library. It publishes a directory which contains over 300 listings of services of interest to parents. It organizes support groups and offers a variety of parenting courses, some in coopera-

tion with the Lethbridge Community College Family Studies Department. Staff are available for individual consultations about child rearing. "We try to empower parents so that they can help their children and themselves," says Parents' Place Director Bonnie Pachaud.

* * *

A two-part invitational conference on child sexual abuse will be held in Medicine Hat in the fall. Conference sessions will focus on therapy and legal system issues. A primary objective will be to encourage the establishment of networking among professionals and agencies in the southern part of the province.

Edmonton

More than 150 people gathered in Edmonton on March 3 to learn about elder abuse, at a workshop jointly organized by the Edmonton Inter-Agency Group on Elder Abuse and the Edmonton New Horizons Committee on Abuse of the Elderly. Maurice Miron, Seniors Consultant for Health and Welfare Canada, outlined the strategy he is recommending the federal government take in addressing the problem of elder abuse. Wanda Cree, staff member from the Alberta Senior Citizens Secretariat, and Diane Spillett, the former Seniors Consultant with the Edmonton Board of Health, talked about the myths and realities of elder abuse. Annette McCullough, Director of the Social Work Department of Kerby Centre in Calgary, described the work she and her staff are doing at the centre. She emphasized that few people come to them with abuse as the presenting problem. However, careful interviewing and listening encourages those who are being abused to talk about their situation.

Northeast

The Community Health Worker Program, AVC Lac La Biche, and North Central Alberta Crisis Intervention Association joined forces to organize a two-day workshop on family violence, called "Working Together: A Community Response" in Lac La Biche, which was held on May 26 and 27. Participants included students in the Community Health Worker program, and many community agency representatives and individuals from Lac La Biche area and from several other communities. Sev-

eral forms of family violence were examined and participants went away with an increased understanding of the problem.

Calgary

Several schools in Calgary have asked Alberta Social Services for more information about child abuse. Child Welfare staff have responded by meeting with the principal and staff in the schools to talk about the Child Welfare Act, the mandate of the department, and indicators of abuse and neglect. Contact with each school continues every two weeks for two to three months. School personnel discuss any concerns they have about particular children and the child protection worker passes on information about services the department and/or community can offer. "What it has done," says Konrad Dyterniski, Plaza 14 District Office Manager, "is establish a very positive relationship between the school board and the department."

Northwest

Many people in the Grande Prairie area have been working together for over a year developing a plan on services for children. The initial thrust for the plan came from the Multidepartmental Children's Services Project Management Team, made up of Regional Directors of Social Services, Mental Health Services and the Alberta Solicitor General's Department. Under the direction of a project management committee, a three-tier approach was implemented. Tier I consisted of Child Welfare staff identifying gaps in services and making proposals for ways to fill the gaps. Tier II focused on recommending ways to improve communication about, and coordination of services provided by government departments. Tier III involved more than 30 community agency representatives in the preparation of a plan to gather information from the grassroots. Input has been obtained through interviews and study groups in all the communities in the district. The information gathered will be fed back to the study groups for review and used in formulating recommendations about services needed for children. "The involvement of so many people has made this an exhilarating experience," says Ron MacDonald, Social Services District Office Manager, Grande Prairie.

Calendar of Events

October 3-5, 1988, Toronto

"Focus on Child Abuse: New Knowledge, New Directions."

Contact: Abby Katz Starr
The Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse
25 Spadina Road
Toronto M5R 2S9
(416) 921-3151

October 5-7, 1988, Edmonton

"Mental Illness and Violence: Myths and Realities"

Contact: Mr. J. de Cangas
Alberta Hospital
Box 307
Edmonton T5J 2J7
(403) 472-5555

October 13-18, 1988, Edmonton

Child Sexual Abuse Workshops featuring Sandra Butler

Contact: Personal Development Centre
15108-76 Avenue
Edmonton T5R 2Z9
(403) 487-6492

October 18-20, 1988, Calgary

"The Turning Point: Families and Communities in Crisis"

Contact: Charles Grant
Lethbridge Community College
3000 College Drive South
Lethbridge T1K 1L6
(403) 320-3200

November 3-6, 1988, Red Deer

Alberta Foster Parents Training Conference

Contact: Alberta Foster Parents Association
#1250, 10055-106 Street
Edmonton T5J 2Y2
(403) 429-9923

May 16-19, 1989, Banff

"Victims: The Canadian Perspective"

Contact: W. Dunfield
#314, 9833-109 Street
Edmonton, T5K 2E8
(403) 427-5050

June 18-23, 1989, Ottawa

"National Invitational Colloquy on Family Violence"

Contact: Diane Ponée
Family Violence Prevention Division
Health and Welfare Canada
Brooke Claxton Building
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa K1A 1B5
(613) 957-0622

Film Review

The Elderly at Risk Series

Two new films about elder abuse can now be borrowed from the National Film Board. The third one in the series will begin production this summer. It will focus on innovative home support programs, offering examples of enlightened attitudes towards care of the elderly in the community.

Film One: Mr. Nobody

Mr. Nobody is a film about private rights vs. community responsibilities, and self-neglect. It is the true story of an aging Toronto resident whose life style conflicts with that of his neighbors and with the regulations of the public health department. After being evicted from his home, hospitalized, drugged against his will, and declared mentally and financially incompetent, Jack fights back and returns to his home. With the help of Senior Link, a local community organization, he attempts to take back control of his affairs. The film raises some important questions about the rights of elderly persons to make decisions for themselves, and the consequences of allowing them to do so and of denying them those rights.

Film Two: A House Divided

This film is based on four real-life stories about elder abuse in families. As the stories reveal, senior citizens can be subjected to abuse in several forms, ranging from the confiscation of their money and possessions, to verbal abuse and intimidation, to physical attack.

The first story is about a loving family trying to care for an elderly aunt, whose failing health and difficult behavior create increasing stress for the caregivers. Finally, the family reaches out for help and reluctantly makes other arrangements for the aunt's care before the situation deteriorates into abuse.

The second vignette depicts a sad story of financial exploitation. A chronically ill woman and her invalid husband are cheated out of most of their life savings by their daughter and son-in-law. The conflict tears the family apart and in the end the elderly couple are prevented from seeing their grandchildren.

Physical abuse is the subject of the third story. An elderly woman is repeatedly assaulted by her only son. Despite the recurring abuse she continues to hope that someone will be able to help her son change his behavior.

An elderly Chinese man living in San Francisco is the subject of the last story. His wife and adopted son have relegated him to a room in the basement and have deprived him of his social security money. He reaches out to a community organization which helps him find different living accommodation and other support in the community. This story poignantly depicts the plight of elderly immigrants living in North America, who are far from familiar people and places, and struggling with different customs, values and attitudes.

Each film is 35 minutes long and is available on video tape as well as 16 mm.

"FOCUS: FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION" is a quarterly publication of the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. Submissions for future issues, especially news about community activities, are welcome. To put your name on the mailing list or for additional copies, contact the Office. Address all correspondence to: The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence
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